



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE PHOTOS/JAN SOMMA-HAMMEL

The Manfredis' annual party produced enough sauce to last the Manfredis, their five children's families and an aunt and uncle for a year.

Sauce-making party 'sono buoni'

Knee-deep in tomatoes, the merry Manfredis slice, dice, oil and boil

By **GLENN NYBACK**
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Forty bushels of bright red plum tomatoes.

Fifteen family members cleaning, boiling and mashing the pulpy fruit.

Four hundred eighty quarts of marinara sauce.

Yesterday's well-oiled, annual sauce-making party in the Annadale backyard of Joseph and Esther Manfredi brought out the ultimate in Italian pride. And it produced enough sauce to last the Manfredis, their five children's families and an aunt and uncle for a year.

"We have a system," explained Joann Cina, one of



Joseph Manfredi and Joseph Quadara, 11, strain the tomatoes.

four Manfredi daughters, as she pointed to an assembly line with several workstations. After being washed and slit in half, the tomatoes are boiled, drained, peeled and pureed before salt and basil is added prior to the ambrosia being poured into jars. Then the jars are processed in a boiling water

bath, which seals them and safely preserves the sauce.

"Then it's off to the shelves in our houses," Ms. Cina said. "We have fun. We look forward to it every year."

Candice Bellocchio, 19, somehow "escaped" the most arduous of family chores each year when she was away at various sports camps — until yesterday, when she got down and dirty with the rest of her tomato-loving clan.

"It's crazy," the Hofstra University sophomore said, her white T-shirt dotted with red splashes. "But it's fun. No other family would do this."

And she'll have plenty of homemade goodness to bring back to her dorm room in September.

"It's better than Ragu, which you use at college," she said.

Mama Esther Manfredi, striving for a smooth operation, directed family mem-

bers who had finished with their tasks to other areas where they could help.

"We really enjoy ourselves," she said. "Everybody is happy. We're together, we laugh, we joke. We look forward to having everyone over."

Mrs. Manfredi, who used to cook sauce with her mother growing up in Mola di Bari, Italy, kept up the tradition after marrying Joseph Manfredi in 1959. The annual backyard, end-of-summer-sauce-making picnic has been going on for 26 years.

"The most important thing is to pass on to our kids and grandchildren the culture, the traditions and all these things a lot of [people] forgot," Joseph Manfredi said, adding that this year's sauce is likely the best ever made because of how ripe — and non-watery — the tomatoes were. "We had the best tomatoes we ever bought. We're going to have a great sauce."

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